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Summary record of the 1st meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh)

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03-53730 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Election of officers

1. *Mr. Cronenberg-Mossberg (Sweden), Mr. Raubenheimer (South Africa) and Ms. Zubčević (Croatia) were elected Vice-Chairmen and Mr. Briz Gutiérrez (Guatemala) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.*

Statement by the Chairman

2. **The Chairman** said that meetings would begin punctually at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. If a speaker was absent, his or her delegation would automatically be placed last on the list of speakers.

3. During the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the Committee had used only 68 per cent of its allocated conference resources and had lost 21.4 hours owing to late starting and early adjournment of meetings. He hoped that the Committee would be able to improve on those statistics at the current session.

4. He proposed that speakers should be limited to 10 minutes for the general debate and 7 minutes for statements made under specific agenda items. Introductions by members of the Secretariat and representatives of agencies, funds and programmes would also be limited to 10 minutes and should focus on highlights and priorities; they should, if possible, be distributed in advance.

5. The Committee's agenda was based on clusters as laid down in General Assembly resolutions 52/12 B, 50/227 and 48/162. The proposed programme of work took into account the availability of reports and, as far as possible, the presence of high-level representatives of the Secretariat, agencies, funds and programmes.

6. As requested in resolution 50/227, resolutions would be shorter and, for issues of a procedural nature, decisions would be used instead of resolutions. Deadlines for the submission of draft proposals would be strictly adhered to and would be extended only in exceptional circumstances.

7. Following the successful practice of previous years, he intended to organize briefings by senior officials, panel discussions on agenda items and keynote addresses.

8. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the arrangements he had described were acceptable to the Committee.

9. *It was so decided.*

Organization of work (A/58/250 and A/C.2/58/L.1)

10. **The Chairman** drew attention to document A/C.2/58/L.1 and to the decisions taken by the General Assembly based on the recommendations contained in the first report of the General Committee (A/58/250) concerning the organization of work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. The target date for the conclusion of the Committee's work was Friday, 5 December 2003.

11. **Mr. Seth** (Secretary of the Committee) drew attention to the following proposed adjustments to the programme of work: the Bureau had recommended that the general debate should begin at 3 p.m. rather than 10 a.m. on 6 October 2003, that item 91, sub-items (b) to (f), should be considered on the afternoon of 22 October and the mornings of 23 and 24 October and that item 98 should be considered at both meetings on 9 October.

12. **Ms. Tamlyn** (United States of America) said that her delegation would have preferred to retain the original programme of work as proposed by the Secretariat. In particular, the dates of the high-level dialogue for the implementation of the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in the General Assembly on 29 and 30 October 2003, should have been taken into account. The proposed rescheduling of the discussion of items 91 and 98 was inconsistent with the overall goal of improving the Committee's efficiency. Lastly, she wondered how the Chairman planned to establish the working group which would consider the indicative programme of work for the Committee, contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 57/270 B on integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields.

13. **Mr. Benmellouk** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that he endorsed the proposed changes to the Committee's programme of work and was prepared to be flexible regarding the general debate. He drew attention to the tentative list of Second Committee special events and noted with concern that the events were scheduled to take place

during the time normally allotted to meetings and that, as a result, only three meetings — rather than the usual six — would be devoted to discussion of macroeconomic policy questions. He would prefer to have these events scheduled for the lunch break, as had been done in the past.

14. **Mr. Iwai** (Japan) said that while he shared the concerns expressed by the representative of the United States of America and believed that the programme of work originally proposed by the Secretariat would have permitted a more focused discussion of macroeconomic issues in the context of the General Assembly's high-level dialogue for the implementation of the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development, he was prepared to accept the proposed changes.

15. **Mr. Bernardini** (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the proposed changes to the programme of work were an improvement. While the planned special events would undoubtedly enrich the Committee's work, they should not be scheduled during the lunch break; it might be useful to hold the panel discussion on trade before, rather than after, the high-level dialogue. Lastly, drawing attention to paragraphs 60 and 61 of General Assembly resolution 57/270 B, which contained proposals for improved coordination of the agendas of the Second and Third Committees, he welcomed the proposal that the bureaux of the two Committees should hold a joint meeting.

16. **Mr. Stanislavov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation was prepared to approve the proposed changes to the programme of work. However, the fact that key discussions in the Committee would overlap with plenary meetings of the General Assembly, would cause problems for certain delegations.

17. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat had done its best to avoid overlap with the work of the General Assembly. Replying to the representative of the United States of America, he said that some adjustments had already been made in response to that delegation's concerns. He planned to discuss the composition of the future working group, first individually with delegations and then in a broader forum, as soon as possible.

18. **Mr. Benmellouk** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that while the special events should be timed to coincide with the Committee's consideration of relevant agenda items — for example, the panel discussion on microcredit and poverty could be scheduled to coincide with consideration of agenda item 98 — they should not replace discussion of the items themselves.

19. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat had invited an impressive list of policy-makers, academics and representatives of civil society to serve as panellists and that the special events would make a significant contribution to the Committee's work.

20. **Mr. Gupta** (Canada) said that, like the delegations of Japan and the United States of America, he was concerned by the potential conflict between the Committee's programme of work and the high-level dialogue for the implementation of the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development. While the tentative list of special events was impressive, he regretted that no panel discussions had been planned on the issues of science and technology or the environment. Lastly, he endorsed the proposal to hold a joint meeting of the bureaux of the Second and Third Committees and looked forward to the establishment of the new working group.

21. **Ms. Tamlyn** (United States of America), reiterating that her delegation attached great importance to the creation of the new working group, asked the Chairman how soon he planned to meet with individual delegations to discuss the matter and when the working group would begin to meet.

22. **The Chairman** said he would provide that information at a later date.

23. **Mr. Benmellouk** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, asked why the Committee should be expected to make recommendations to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee on the reports submitted to the General Assembly under agenda item 91 ("Macroeconomic policy questions"); such a procedure had never been followed in the past.

24. **Mr. Seth** (Secretary of the Committee) explained that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/282, the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/58/16) would now be considered directly by the substantive committees concerned; the Chairman of each Committee would then transmit the recommendations emerging from those discussions to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee. The relevant sections of the report were paragraphs 473 to 488 and 542 to 551.

25. **The Chairman** said that if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve its programme of work as contained in document A/C.2/58/L.1, as orally amended.

26. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.